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# ORATION

Delivered July 4th, 1851, in the Capitol at Annapolis,

BY COL. GEORGE W. HUGHES.

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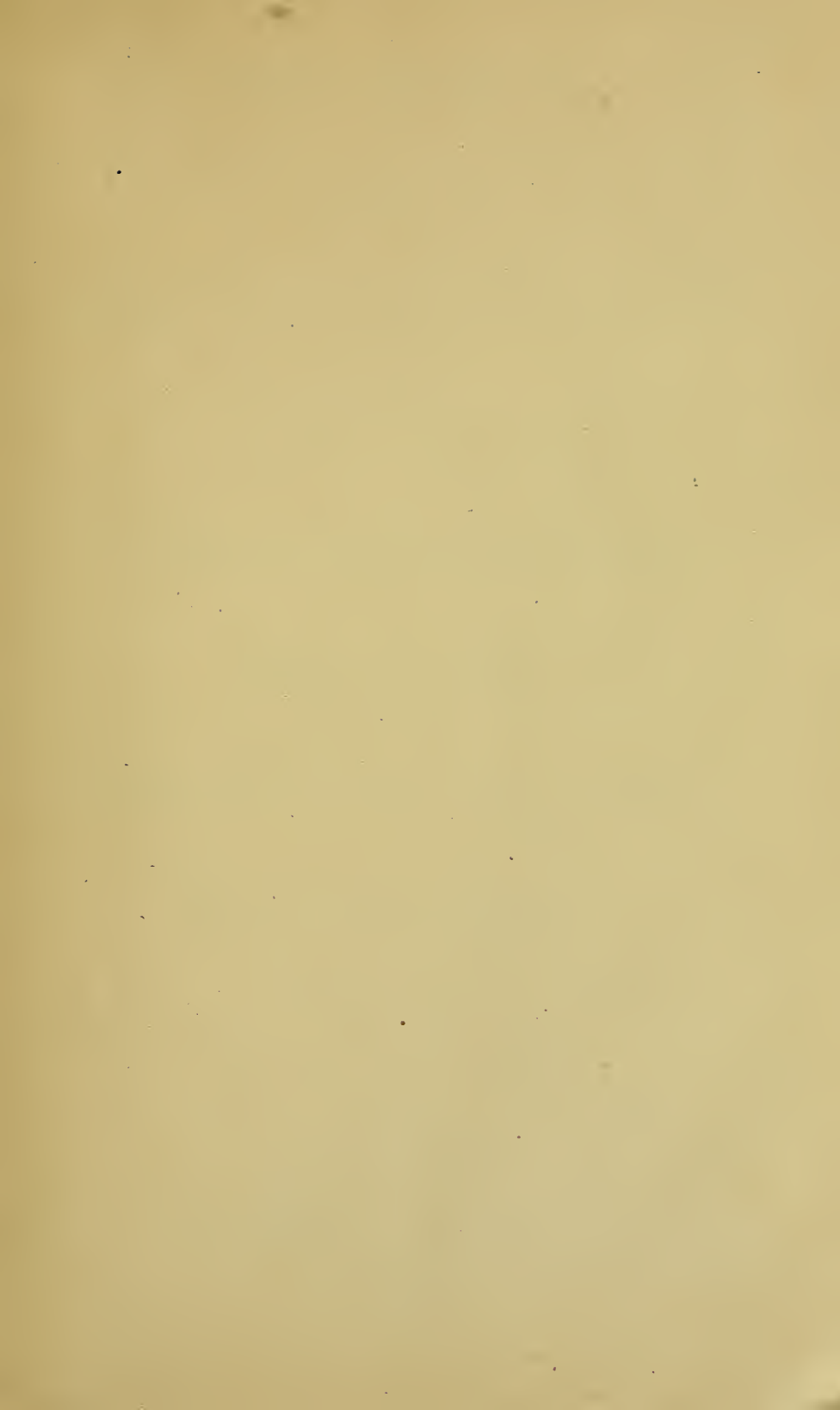
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1851









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# ORATION:

DELIVERED ON THE

## SEVENTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

Of the Declaration of the

INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES,

JULY 4, 1851,

IN THE SENATE CHAMBER OF THE CAPITOL AT ANNAPOLIS.

BY COL. GEO. W. <sup>W. H.</sup>HUGHES.



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ANNAPOLIS:

OFFICE OF THE STATE CAPITOL GAZETTE,

Corner of Public Circle and North-east street.

1851.

W. H. Hughes.

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ANNAPOLIS, July 7th, 1851.

COL. GEO. W. HUGHES :

Dear Sir,—The Committee of Arrangements are very desirous of having the interesting and appropriate address, delivered by you in the Senate Chamber of the Capitol, on the occasion of our last National Anniversary, placed in their hands for publication, that those who had not the opportunity to hear may be gratified by a perusal of the noble and patriotic sentiments therein contained.

As chairman of the committee, I respectfully ask for a copy of your address for the purpose above specified.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. H. O'NEAL, *Ch. Com. of Arrangements.*

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WEST RIVER, Md., July 10, 1851.

My Dear Sir,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 7th inst., requesting a copy of the address delivered by me in Annapolis, on the 4th of the present month, for publication.

It is known to the committee of Arrangements, that owing to an accident, a very brief time was allotted to me for the preparation of the Oration; but I do not feel at liberty to refuse your request, communicated in so kind a manner, and therefore place it at your disposal,

“With all its imperfections on its head.”

Very respectfully, my dear sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE W. HUGHES.

To the Hon. Thomas H. O'Neal, Secretary of State, Chairman Committee of Arrangements, Annapolis, Md.



## ORATION.

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MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

Seventy-five years have been inscribed on the dial-plate of time since the lathers of the Revolution, which separated us from Great Britain, in solemn conclave assembled, published to the world the Declaration of Independence, which we have just heard read, for the maintenance of which they pledged "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor."

This was no idle and unmeaning pledge, for it was made, in the presence of the great Judge of the quick and dead, to whom they appealed for the rectitude of their intentions, and it comprehended almost every thing which men in this world hold in the highest consideration.

From the beginning of time—from the instant when the Supreme Creator of the universe called this globe into existence—placed the luminaries in the firmament, and said "Let there *be light*, and there *was light*," the Sun never rose upon a more glorious day, nor one more fraught with the earthly happiness of mankind, than on the 4th of July, 1776. He had sunk in darkness. He rose in splendor, and as his beams were scattered over our beautiful country and gilded its mountain tops, millions bowed in adoration before him and hailed his advent with the reverence of eastern worshippers. *It was the dawn of a new creation.* The political world was in chaos, and the dark spirit of despotism brooded over its waters. It is true there was occasionally an electric flash—a fitful eruption of the volcano, and a fearful upheaving of the masses, which indicated for

the future a new and better order of things. But *intellect* was wanting to fashion these elements into form and consistency, for knowledge, taste and science had combined with power to rivet still closer upon the people, the fetters of ignorance and superstition. Even in England, the only limited monarchy of that age, the true principles of sovereignty were unknown, and the rights of the people were disregarded—Long and bloody civil and religious wars had formerly desolated that beautiful island, but in the moment of victory, *toleration* was found to mean only the *supremacy* of a sect, and *liberty* the *privileges* of an order. The voices of the working classes—the laboring millions whose sweat and blood had swelled her wealth, filled her coffers, and extended her dominion by land and sea until imperial Rome, in the height of power, was scarcely her equal—was unheard in the legislative councils of the nation. Others reaped where they had sown and enjoyed as well the fruits of their valor as of their toil. If at that period such was the political condition of the people of England, their social position was undoubtedly superior to that of most of the continental population, who out of the municipal corporations, were regarded as mere serfs of the soil, to be transferred with the estates on which they were born and to which they belonged.

It was reserved for the new world to first recognize the rights of man, and to proclaim to the old the fundamental truth that the people are the natural source of all power—of all honor and of all sovereignty.

The success of our revolution, which was long regarded by many eminent men at home and abroad, as a political experiment, has excited all the efforts in Europe for the last 70 years in favor of the rights of the people and the extension of liberal principles—a holy cause, which can no more be arrested by the hand of arbitrary power than the surges of the ocean could be controlled by the voice of Canute—a cause destined to spread until it covers the face of the civilized world, and the very name of king shall become as odious as it was in Italy from the exile of the Tarquins, until liberty expired on the bloody plains of Thessaly. There is now a public opinion which pervades all Europe and is felt and recognized every where. It is whispered in Constantinople and muttered in Madrid. It descends to the dungeons of the Inquisition. It is proclaimed from the seven hills of the Eternal City and is omnipotent in Paris. It has spread over all Germany and has been heard like the sound of many waters in imperial Vienna. It has even penetrated the walls of the Kremlin and caused the Autocrat to tremble on his throne. It can be circumscribed by no geographical bounds; it can be restrained by no cordon of armed retainers. It is in the very atmosphere we breathe, and “leaps from crag to crag like the live thunder.” No sovereign, however despotic, will undertake in the present age to say with the proud and arrogant Louis XIV., “*I am the State*,” for he feels that there is within the State a stronger power than his own, before which, when moved into action, he will be compelled to yield as the sturdy oak is prostrated by the tempest. The monarch is no longer the State, but the especial guardian of *his* people, for whom, they being incapable of self-control, he assumes by the grace of God, the carking cares and toils of government. But this is an ungrateful world; and I have never heard of the *subjects* of a monarchy having expressed any high appreciation of the self-sacrifice shown by those who, living in marble palaces and dining in gilded halls, “wearing purple and fine linen and faring

sumptuously every day,” have generously taken upon themselves all the affairs of State, *except its burdens*.

To avoid the acknowledgment of the great and incontrovertible truth, that the sovereignty of a nation resides in the people, the British Constitution (if the mere will of parliament may be called a constitution) has adopted a ridiculous fallacy—a fallacy so obvious that it can neither deceive themselves nor others. The cornerstone of their political structure is the *axiom* that “the *King can do no wrong*,” and yet they have beheaded one monarch—executed another, and, violating, according to their views, the sacred right of primogeniture, deprived his innocent son, whatever may have been the crimes of the father, of the succession to the throne, to which his claim, according to the plainest principles of the government, was clear and unquestionable; and placed “the sceptre in an unlineal hand, no son of his succeeding.”

Any one who has carefully read the history of the British revolution of 1688–9, must have been struck with the embarrassments of the Whig party by the passive resistance of James the II. Had they not by the wiles of the Prince of Orange, operated so far upon the fears of that pusillanimous tyrant and cruel bigot, as to induce him to leave the kingdom by flight, who can undertake to say what the consequences might have been? In all human probability, the flames of civil discord would once more have been enkindled, and the whole realm have been drenched with fraternal blood; and all this the result of ignorance of the great political truth, (on which, however, they had practiced,) that the governor holds his authority solely by the assent of the governed, and is directly responsible to them for its exercise. The monarch, properly regarded, was simply the chief magistrate of the nation, and like all other magistrates and public officers was invested with special authority for the public welfare; and if they had repudiated in *principle*, as they had in *fact*, his pretensions to rule by the “divine right of kings,” the

whole question would have been easy of solution, and his throne without further trouble been declared forfeited, by the abuse of power.

In truth, disguise it as the British publicists may, the crown was conferred on "William and Mary" by *election*, and there is no avoiding that conclusion; for, if it were not so, a grosser usurpation is unrecorded in history. It is singular that the dogma of "the divine right" should have been so strenuously upheld by the hierarchy of England, when a perusal of Scripture so plainly teaches the salutary lesson that the first king granted by the Almighty to his chosen people was in *ANGER*, and as a punishment for their sins and disobedience.

The only monarch who has fully recognized the people as the source of all sovereignty was Napoleon Bonaparte, who, in his celebrated speech in the Champs de Mai, when he restored the eagles to the different regiments of the French army, said, with as much truth as sublimity, "General, Consul, Emperor! I hold all from the French people." This was uttered in the same spirit of enthusiasm and knowledge of human nature as in his address to the troops before the great battle of Egypt, when, stretching forth his hand, he exclaimed: "From the tops of those pyramids forty centuries contemplate your actions." It was remarked with great force by Robert Hall, an eminent dissenting divine, and one of the first intellects of his age, that "the battle of Waterloo had set back the dial of history ten degrees." And so undoubtedly it did, as regards the progress of liberal principles in Europe.

Looking, my friends, to the consequences entailed by our revolution on the rights and happiness of mankind, how much cause have you and all of us for gratitude, under Providence, to those great men who set the ball in motion.

The history of the world records no spectacle more full of moral sublimity and grandeur than the assembling of the American Congress at Philadelphia, when they

first promulgated to the winds of heaven the political axiom, "that all men are created equal: that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights: that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness:" and that all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

These were new, startling but philosophical truths, very remotely connected with the dreamy speculations of the imaginative politicians of the 17th century, who sought in what was called the "social compact" for the authority of governments, in which each individual man was considered, in his normal condition, as surrendering a portion of his natural rights, and those of *his posterity*, to secure the great ends of civilized society. This view of the origin of governments and the rights of the governed belonged rather to the fancy of the poet than to the philosophy of the statesman; for no such condition of things can be found recorded in the pages of history. On the contrary, our Declaration of Independence boldly proclaimed the *practical fact*, that it was the *living generation* that had the right to establish an organic law for itself, but not to bind future generations, who in their turn would possess an equal right to form a government for themselves.

For the first time in the annals of nations the highest intellect was arrayed against despotic power. From that period may be dated the true expositions of the principles of government,—the correlative duties of the rulers and the ruled, and the annunciation of the fact that all exercise of legitimate authority should be for the "greatest good of the greatest numbers," and beside this, all else was usurpation and abuse.

There is a peculiar propriety that we should assemble and meet together on an occasion like the present, to return thanks to Almighty God, who has blessed us beyond measure as a people, and to manifest our sense of gratitude to the signers of the Declaration of American Independence, who were truly the benefactors of the human race. They were indeed men "out of



the common roll." They brought with them for the performance of their great and holy task, high intellect, moral courage, philosophy, purity of motive and the most exalted patriotism; in fact, all the qualities that dignify and adorn human nature. A more august body never assembled on this earth, nor one charged with a higher mission; for they may be said to have held in their hands the temporal destiny of millions yet unborn. When the barbarian Gauls, under their leader Brennus, penetrated to the Forum, and saw the venerable Roman Senators in their robes of office, quietly seated in their curule chairs and calmly awaiting their approaching fate, struck with admiration and astonishment, they exclaimed: "These are gods!" And yet, the Roman Senate exhibited no greater firmness, no higher moral sublimity, than our *Conscript Fathers*, as each one placed his name to that solemn Declaration of Independence, which in case of failure would have proved the death warrant of the signer. When Charles Carroll affixed his name to that immortal instrument, some one observed that it would be difficult for the British Government to identify him, as there were so many of the same name. He immediately added "of Carrollton," a designation which he ever afterwards retained, and which has become a prouder title than any patent of nobility which royalty could confer. Another remarked: "There goes a million with the dash of a pen;" for he was emphatically, in more senses than one, a "man of a million."—They were indeed, my friends, men of stout hearts and ready hands; they cast every thing "on the hazard of a die;" they calmly prepared to enter into a contest, for life or death, with the most powerful nation of modern times; "on whose dominions," it has been beautifully said, "the sun never sets," and "the roll of whose drums at reveille accompanies him in his daily course;" they well knew the disparity of strength and wealth between the infant Colonies of America and the mother country, and how doubtful such a conflict, looking

to mere human means, must be. It was like the stripling David encountering the Giant of Gath; but they, like he, trusted to a higher than human power. They appealed from their earthly tyrant to the Supreme Judge of the Universe, and their appeal was registered in the chancery of heaven. Looking to him for assistance, they threw down the gage of battle, raised the standard of Independence, and called upon their fellow citizens to rally round it. You all know the history and the result of our war of Independence. You have learned it in childhood on your father's knee. You may be said to have almost drunk it in your mother's milk. The names of Washington and Hancock, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin and their compeers, are as familiar to you as "household words." I shall not attempt to record their heroic deeds; to detail their sufferings, their doubts; to follow them to the field of battle, or to trace their footsteps over plains of snow, too often marked with blood, or to recite their triumph. I shall say nothing of the glories of Bunker Hill, or of Trenton, of Saratoga, or the "crowning mercy" of Yorktown. These are written on the brightest pages of history, and will be read with enthusiasm till time shall be no longer. "The history of our war of independence is but the story of the struggles of a poor and peaceful, but a generally well informed and educated people, against cultivated talent, abundant wealth and disciplined valor. Then, in the glowing language of one of our own bards:—"

Then war became the peasant's joy; her drum  
His merriest music, and her field of death  
His couch of happy dreams  
After life's harvest-home.

He battles, heart and arm, his own blue sky  
Above him, and his own green land around;  
Land of his father's grave,  
His blessing and his prayers!

Land, where he learnt to lisp a mother's name,  
The first beloved on earth, the last forgot—  
Land of his frolic youth—  
Land of his bridal eve!

\*Halleck. Field of the grounded arms.

Land of his children! Vain your columned  
strength,  
Invaders! vain your battle's steel and fire!  
Choose ye the morrow's doom,  
A prison or a grave.

Of such, the mechanical and working classes, were many of the brave men whose intellect and blood secured our liberties. \*Foremost among them was *Nath. Greene*, the hero of the South, the blacksmith of Rhode Island, whom, Hamilton, while he pronounced Washington to be the first man of the age, declared to be "the first soldier of the war." Then followed the *book-binder*, *Knob*, afterwards Secretary of War, or as Randolph of Roanoke, called him, "*Master of the horse*," to President Washington; and amongst the mechanics of N. York, Marinus Willet, the "bravest of the brave." Our interests abroad were represented by the printer, *Franklin*, one of the most illustrious men of the age, who after a long life of toil and privation, consecrated the fruits of his philosophy to the sacred cause of human liberty, and was more honored in Europe for his republican simplicity than princes of the highest rank.

In our councils at home, and one of the most distinguished five to whom was entrusted the high honor of preparing the Declaration of Independence, was the *shoemaker*, *Roger Sherman*, one of our soundest statesmen and most eloquent orators, a man self-educated and self-sustained. Truly "honor and shame from no condition rise."

What a salutary lesson may be drawn from our history by the poor son of toil who spends his days in labor and his nights in study. With natural intellect, with industry, with virtue and sobriety, and an abiding faith in God and love to his fellow man, he may aspire to the highest honors which his countrymen can confer—the *highest honors in the world*—the suffrages of a free and enlightened people. He may find a bright exemplar in Andrew Jackson, and a practical illustration of the genius and

sound republicanism of our institutions. Left at an early age an unprotected orphan, invested with no adventitious advantages in life, isolated and self-dependent, with no support but the indomitable energy of his own will, we find him elevated to his proud position by the gratitude, respect and confidence of his countrymen for his eminent public services, his exalted patriotism and his proverbial integrity. With instinctive sagacity, they hailed him as the *man of the age*, and breaking loose from the trammels and organization of party, and snapping asunder the leading strings of interested and selfish politicians, the masses rose in their strength and carried him triumphantly on their shoulders to the presidential chair. He owed *his* advancement to no clique and to no faction. No caucus, no convention was necessary for *his* nomination, for there arose spontaneously a voice from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, from the cities and from the fields, from the valleys and from the mountains, saying, "This is *the man of the people* and *we* will that he shall rule over us." One great element of his success consisted in, what the mere politician cannot comprehend—his sterling integrity of character in every relation in life. Andrew Jackson was one of the most *honest men that ever lived*. He deceived no man; he violated no pledges. His election and administration furnish proofs that Republics are not ungrateful, but reward merit, intellect and eminent services wherever found; and that the true "republicanism of this nation has grown with its growth, and strengthened with its strength."

If another example were wanting it may be found in our present worthy chief magistrate, the clothier's apprentice, who at a most critical period of our history was called to the exercise of the highest functions of sovereignty, and who has thus far filled his high destiny with honor to himself and to the country.

My friends, your own lovely city of Annapolis, the "time honored" capital of Maryland, and under the proprietary gov-

\*This and the succeeding paragraph are condensed from an Address before "the Mechanics' Institute of the city of New York," by G. C. Verplank, Esq., 1833.

ernment the metropolis of the wealth and fashion of the colonies, and which has since so well sustained its ancient reputation for hospitality and beauty, is rich in historical associations. It is the birth-place of Charles Carroll, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and the last survivor upon earth of that immortal band. It was granted to him to attain extreme old age, with faculties unimpaired, and to witness in the growth of our glorious union in wealth and power, the full fruition of his early hopes. He lived to enjoy what might almost be called *posthumous fame*. It was here that, following the example of Boston, the obnoxious tea was destroyed, by which act Maryland was committed to the cause of the Revolution. And here within these very walls, "the Father of his Country," after the termination of one of the most memorable struggles on record, and the security of our National Independence, divested himself of the almost dictatorial authority with which he had been clothed, surrendered his commission\* to the power that gave it, and retired for a while to the peaceful shades of Mount Vernon, until called by the unanimous voice of a grateful people to rule a country he had saved. It was the sublime termination of a great historical drama, performed on the stage of a continent, with the world for an audience, and its actors heroes and statesmen. He entered this hall the honored chief of a victorious army, flushed with success, and devoted to its leader. He left it a simple citizen, like Cincinnatus, to return to the cultivation of the soil. As he retired from this room how many emotions must have agitated his soul! How many associations must have rushed on his memory, oppressing it with the weight of their sweet and bitter recollections! The scenes through which he had passed—the many hours of darkness, of doubt, and of uncertainty, which had hung over the Revolution—the battles he had

fought, and above all the remembrance of those whose lives had been sacrificed in the holy cause of liberty, must all have been called up before him with the distinctness of reality.

And here the definitive treaty of peace, signed in Paris on the 3d of September, 1783, by the plenipotentiaries of their respective governments, which acknowledged and established the independence of the colonies, was ratified by Congress and the great seal of the United States affixed on the 14th January, 1784.\*

Your city nurtures within its bosom our most venerable seat of learning, which can boast amongst its alumni many of the eminent statesmen of the age, while the names of *Humphrey* and of *Sparks* will be recognized wherever science is cultivated or letters honored.

In taking a retrospective view of our history for the last seventy-five years, how much cause do we find for pride and congratulation! Many are still living, to whom a merciful Providence has vouchsafed the privilege of seeing the *thirteen feeble colonies* risen to the stature of thirty full grown and flourishing States inhabited by a brave, intelligent and industrious population, devoted to republican institutions and to our peculiar form of government; whose energies and perseverance have driven off the beasts of prey "and men as wild and fierce as they;" and whose hardy hands and brawny arms have prostrated the forests, and converted the howling wilderness into a "garden blooming like the rose;" while railroads and canals traverse almost every portion of our wide-spread empire, and even the lightning of heaven has been chained, by American genius, to the heavy car, and has been rendered subservient to the physical wants, and even the messenger of the thoughts, of civilized man. We have, indeed, much reason to be proud of the present condition of our magnificent country, and to look forward

\*Gen. Washington resigned his commission on the 23d of December, 1783, subsequent to the reception of the treaty of peace, but before its ratification by Congress.

\*For these facts I am indebted to the investigations of *Thos. Karney, Esq.*, of Annapolis.



with bright anticipations to its future destiny. Already we number more than twenty millions of population, spread over a continent whose shores are laved by the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans—possessed of every variety of soil and temperature from the Hyperborean regions of the North to the soft and sunny South; and whose mighty rivers bear on their troubled surface, the rich agricultural productions of every clime; while within its bosom have been deposited, by a beneficent Creator, untold millions of mineral wealth.

It was such a glorious vision as this which must have burst on the Poet-Prophet,\* when contemplating the rise and fall of the Assyrian, Babylonian, Macedonian and Roman empires, he exclaimed in the spirit of inspiration,

Westward the course of empire takes his way;  
The four first acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day:  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Our increase in wealth and population—our success in cultivating the arts and sciences, especially those connected with utilitarian objects, is unexampled in the history of nations. We have shown, too, our ability to maintain our high destiny by an appeal to arms when necessary. The aggressions of Great Britain, in 1812, compelled us, once more, but most reluctantly, to resort to war for the protection of "Free trade and Sailor's rights," for we had seen our ships plundered, our citizens outraged, and our flag insulted on the great highway of nations. To have quietly submitted to this degradation would have been an act of political suicide. It would have blotted us out from the list of nations, and there would have been left to us only the poor privilege of choosing a master powerful enough to extend to us that protection which we could no longer command for ourselves.

And again, but a few years since, when the duplicity and the oft-repeated injuries inflicted on us by a neighboring republic, so called—but in reality a military aristoc-

racy—forced us once more to take up arms, thousands, at the first call of their country, left their plows and workshops—the luxuries and comforts of home, for the toilsome march—the nightly bivouac—the perils of a pestilential climate, and the dangers of battle in a foreign land. The question was, "Who would be permitted to fight for their country?"—not, "Who should be compelled to render military service?"—for of the masses who flocked to the rendezvous, nearly one-half were rejected. "The race was to the swift," and the government could establish no other rule than to accept of those who first offered.

How different is this from other countries, where the ruthless law of conscription yearly takes from home, rarely to be returned, except in old age, with battered bodies and shattered constitutions, nearly all of the youthful male population. It is the law of force; and the subject is compelled to risk his life in fighting the battles of a government, that, perhaps, in his heart of hearts, he holds in contempt and hatred for its corruptions and oppressions.

The military power and resources of our country are unknown to Europe and scarcely appreciated by ourselves. They saw but a small standing force, too insignificant in point of numbers to be called an army, and wondered at our temerity in embarking in a contest with a nation which had been in a constant state of warfare for thirty years, and had achieved its independence of a country celebrated for its courage and obstinacy; for it is well known that the world never saw, from the time of the Macedonian phalanx, a better infantry than the Spanish under the "Great Captain," Gonzalvo de Cordova. And yet, while fighting at a remote distance from our supplies, a formidable enemy in his own country and even before the walls of his capitol, we were charitably feeding out of our abundance the starving nations of Europe. But the truth is, our little army was probably, in discipline and the science of war, equal, if not superior to any force of like numbers in the world, and every citizen of the Uni-

\* Bishop Berkley.

ted States is a soldier. While the whole policy of our government is widely pacific, the genius of our people is warlike, and in no other country is military reputation more highly appreciated and rewarded. If this were the proper occasion, it would be easy to show that this is a natural and proper feeling, and one well calculated to insure the perpetuity of our institutions—but time is wanting. It will not, however, be out of place to remark that one important element of our military strength is to be found in the volunteer system; a system often held up by the ignorant to unmerited ridicule—but one on which we can rely with safety in the hour of pressing danger. There is scarcely a large city in our union that is not capable, with the assistance of the forts built by the Federal government, and which the volunteers may man, of self-defence against any force that will ever probably be thrown upon our shores. It has been my fortune to visit most of the great military powers of Europe, and to examine their resources with the interest which naturally attaches to the profession for which I have been educated, and in which I have spent more than half of the life ordinarily allotted to man, and I do not hesitate to assert, as the result of much observation, that I could designate amongst the volunteer corps of our own State, troops, in point of drill, discipline, and military bearing, far superior to the celebrated French National Guards. And I have no doubt that our distinguished fellow-citizen, the Governor of Maryland, who honors us with his presence, would, if appealed to, fully confirm this statement. The truth is that no people in the world are so readily converted into soldiers as our own people, and none that so willingly conform to discipline, submit to legitimate authority, and become so soon proficient in the drill. This is the natural result of their intelligence, love of order, respect for authority, and attachment to military life; and they soon comprehend that their own safety, and reputation, dearer to them than life itself, are all depend-

ent on a proper subordination to those who are placed in command. Besides this, they are familiar with the use of arms, and inured to labor. Like the Roman soldiers, the field of battle is to them a relief from their ordinary daily toil. In no other country than this, will you find the citizen equipping himself at considerable personal expense and freely giving up his time to learn the details of a soldier's life, without the countenance and support of the government. All this is on his part gratuitous; but the consequence is that our government could, at almost a moment's warning, if an exigency should require it, call into the field nearly half a million of well-drilled, able-bodied and well-armed citizen soldiers, whose natural courage and patriotism, would more than compensate for any deficiency in military science.

It is creditable to our volunteers, that in the few civil commotions with which we have been cursed, they have been found on the side of law and order—the *conservators of the public peace*; and that they have not hesitated when circumstances imperiously called for it, to use the arms placed in their hands, against those who would make war against the life and property of their fellow citizens. This, in combination with the wise precaution of our government, in sedulously cultivating, on the recommendation of General Washington, the highest grade of military science, constitutes our true military strength, and makes us one of the most powerful nations of the earth.

It is also a matter of congratulation that our government has established here a school for our maritime arm of defence, from which the best fruits may be anticipated, not only from the character of the young gentlemen who compose it, but from that of the gallant officers and accomplished professors who are devoting their best energies for its success, and to meet the just expectations of our people. We all look with peculiar pride to the achievements of our navy: and if there be any of those young gentlemen, belonging to the Naval Academy, within the sound of my voice,

let me say to them earnestly, with the kindness of one attached to a kindred branch of the common service, that they have been selected from the youths of our country as the special depositaries of a great and precious trust—that of upholding on the uttermost waters of the ocean the glorious flag of “the stars and stripes,” which has never yet been struck in the face of an enemy with dishonor or disgrace. I feel sure that it never will be; it is in safe hands: but woe betide the man that will first permit it: “’Twere better for him that he had never been born.”

But, my friends, there are *other* battles to be fought besides those on the ensanguined field: there are *other* conflicts which require as much of firmness and of nerve, as to charge with rushing squadrons in the melee of the fight, or to strike for the honor of our flag. There are *other* laurels to be won, though bloodless, as fresh and green as those which deck the victor's brow, or spring from the hero's grave. It is in doing battle manfully for great constitutional principles, and for the rights of the people. These are the fields of civic strife! These the wreaths of civic triumph! In a mixed audience like the present, composed of persons of widely different sentiments on many of the great questions of the times, I shall make no remarks on the struggle through which we have just passed, nor indulge in any comments on the important instrument which this day becomes, by the unmistakable and irresistible will of the people, the Constitution of the State of Maryland.

We live in an age pregnant of great events—a progressive age—in the arts and sciences, and especially in the science of politics. That which was adapted to the wants of the last generation is unsuited to the present: and that which may answer our purpose, must, in turn, give way to the wishes of our descendants. It would be presumptuous in us to attempt, even if we possessed the right, to enact a fundamental law for the government of posterity.

It is well that we should sometimes recur to the true theory of our government,

which is in practice too often violated or denied; and this would seem to be a proper occasion for such a purpose. As I understand the matter, and as we received it from our fathers, the fundamental principle of republicanism, as contradistinguished from monarchy—the corner-stone of our political structure, is the axiom, that the people are the depositary of all sovereignty—that all public officers are constituted for their benefit and should be directly responsible to them for the exercise of their delegated power; and that, in the language of the Declaration of Independence, “Whenever any form of government becomes subversive of these ends, [the ends for which it was instituted,] it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as *to them* may seem most likely to effect *their* safety or happiness.” Of the necessity of such changes then the *living* people alone can be the judge, and the duty of a good citizen is to bow cheerfully to their mandate. This view of the case is usually conceded in this country; but is often practically denied; for while the sovereignty of the people is admitted, as an abstract proposition, it is contended that they are incapable of exercising many of the attributes of sovereignty, especially that of selecting the ministers of their will; and that while they are competent to choose their governors and enact their own laws, through their representatives, they are nevertheless incompetent to select those who are to construe and give force to those laws—a higher than legislative authority. If this be true, then is our whole theory of government wrong and the people no longer sovereign, for that very power involves the exercise of one of the very highest attributes of sovereignty. I can very well understand why, in other countries, where the appointing power is vested in the king, certain officers should be rendered, by the tenure of office, independent of the appointing power; but I confess that I do not comprehend the necessity



with us, where there is but *one party*, and where they are instituted for the benefit of the people, on whose interests and rights they are called upon directly to act. I wish to see with us no officer independent of public opinion, or claiming to hold power from any other source than that of the sovereign authority. If there be any truth in our principles of government, then we cannot err when every public agent is brought as near as possible to the people, and held responsible to them.

I have an abiding confidence in what may be termed the *instincts of the people*. In the settlement of great questions agitating the whole land, they are seldom wrong. How many examples of the truth of this assertion may we not find in our history for the last few years? A single one will suffice, as I desire not to be tedious. In what I shall now have to say, I trust that I shall not be understood as speaking in any mere party spirit, for such a supposition would do me great injustice. I wish only to draw from past events, legitimate conclusions, in which I believe those who hear me will concur. We all remember the crisis through which we passed when the Bank of the United States was contending, with its power of wealth, to perpetuate its existence. We all remember the predictions of pressure and ruin in case it were refused. We were told that our ships would rot at our wharves—that commerce would stagnate—that the exchanges would become deranged—that industry would be paralyzed, and we were even threatened with violence and revolution.

This was honestly believed by many of the most eminent statesmen and the brightest intellects of the age; and yet amidst all this elemental strife, this war of factions, while all around him quaked with *present* fear and *future* apprehensions, the *Hero of New Orleans*—the *soldier sage*, stood firm and immovable,

"Like some tall cliff that rears its awful form,  
Heaves from the vale, and midway meets the  
storm;

While round its breast the rolling clouds are  
spread,  
*Eternal sunshine settles on its head.*"

And what sustained him in this controversy? It was the honest confidence, the natural *instincts* of a generous people, whose impulse scattered to the winds the sophistries of those who wished to batten on the public wealth, and to establish a system, the tendency of which was "to make the rich richer, and the poor poorer." When the contest was over, the storm was laid, the clouds disappeared, and the sun of prosperity shone forth in his pristine splendor. And when, let me ask, has our country, from the foundation of the government, been more prosperous and happy than *now*? When has our currency been more sound, our commerce more active, our exchanges more uniform, and when has labor been better rewarded?

It has been said, within the last few years, by the great light of *this* or any *other age*—by a man whose genius and patriotism we all delight to honor—one of the most strenuous advocates for the re-charter of the Bank, that a "*Bank of the United States* was an obsolete idea." The brilliant intellect then of Daniel Webster was *wrong* and the glorious instincts of the people were *right*. We might multiply many examples to the same purpose, but I shall thus briefly dispose of the subject.

While we enjoy the inestimable blessings of our political system, we should not forget that we hold a precious trust for the benefit of posterity. This trust we can honorably discharge only by respecting the example of our fathers and transmitting it unsullied to our descendants. We must inculcate in our children their glorious precepts, cherish their republican principles, imitate their simplicity and economy, and strengthen the institutions which they established. Those institutions form a wise and safe system of government to which we should adhere with a religious devotion. And above all let us not forget that our national constitution, under the shadow and protection of whose wings we have grown

to be a mighty people, was the result of a mutual compromise of various and conflicting interests, feelings and jealousies; and that it can be sustained only by the same sacrifices and compromises, by a steady adherence to the great and immutable principles of justice, and by preserving inviolate its conditions and guarantees.

It is not too much to say that the ingenuity of man could not possibly devise a form of government better adapted in all its parts to our geographical position in reference to other nations, to our wants and to our necessities. It possesses the harmony and order of the solar system, in which each particular planet, keeping within its own prescribed limits and moving within its own orbit, revolves around the common centre of the whole; nor can one "shoot madly from its sphere" without disturbing the equilibrium and endangering the safety of all. By such an eccentric course on the part of a State, our whole confederate system might be destroyed. And where is the master spirit, where the creative mind, that could again call it into existence and mould it into its present symmetrical proportions from this political "wreck of matter and crush of worlds?" As well attempt to breathe vitality into a skeleton, or to expect life from the galvanic action upon a corpse.

Our Union, by leaving to each State the unrestricted regulation of its internal and domestic affairs and admitting each to a fair participation in the power and honors of the General Government, is capable of *infinite expansion* without incurring the danger, on the one hand, of centralization, or on the other, of breaking asunder by the weight of its extremities. By this reasonable arrangement the centripetal and centrifugal forces of our political system are held in just equilibrio; and a perfect harmony of interest and action may thus be maintained between different members of the confederacy, notwithstanding an occasional perturbation which may for awhile exert its baleful and disturbing influences. The federation can as well embrace within its frater-

nal arms a hundred as thirteen States, and with each sovereign increment gain in dignity and power. Who then can presume to set bounds to its legitimate increase, or to attempt to limit its territorial acquisitions? Or who can stay its march, until it covers the *isles of our seas*, and

"The whole boundless continent is ours?"

None but he who holds in the hollow of his hand the fate of men and directs with his finger the destiny of nations!

No government, since the first dawn of civilization to the present time, with the exception of our own, has ever satisfactorily solved the great problem of fusing into one homogeneous mass, men of different nations, tongues, and creeds. The Babylonian and Persian kings did not accomplish it. The empire of the Macedonian conqueror—philosopher as well as hero—expired with its founder. The Romans signally failed in their efforts; and the sceptre and iron crown of Charlemagne remained buried in his sarcophagus, until seized by a greater than Charlemagne for a period as brief as it was brilliant. In recent times the attempt to *force* a union between Belgium and Holland resulted only in mutual hatred and ultimately in bloody separation; and at this time we find in Central and Northern Europe, the different races of Teutonic, Finnish, Slavonic and Magyar origin, as distinct in feelings, language and religion, as they were centuries ago; nor is there any probable closer approximation to be anticipated for the future. England has not been more successful than her sister monarchies in conciliating conquered or peacefully acquired countries; for the people of Ireland and the habitants of Canada, are at this day as hostile to her policy and institutions as they were when first incorporated with her dominions; while she cannot even rely upon the colonies peopled by her own subjects. And yet we have seen in our own history a whole territory—mature as Minerva from the brain of Jupiter—composed almost exclusively of a people

foreign in blood, language\* and religion to the great mass of the population of the rest of the country, admitted as a sovereign member of our confederation; yet where will you find a more *loyal* State, or one more devoted to the Union than Louisiana? She has shown it on the field of battle—has consecrated herself by the best blood of her sons, and as each revolving year brings with it the anniversary of the victory of New Orleans, she displays with a just pride, the tattered but glorious banner of the Louisiana Legion, torn by the balls of

\* Not many years since one of the U. States Senators from Louisiana could not speak English. One of her present Senators is the eloquent Soulé, a man whose views, it is true, are rather *ultra* on the subject of State's rights, but whose patriotism is undoubted.

the invader, who had counted with a false security upon the disaffection of her inhabitants.

In the language of one of our most eloquent writers, "May the rights of the State government be preserved inviolate—the government of the United States be sustained by the patriotism of the people, in the faithful discharge of its constitutional duties, and the political *Arch* of our *Union* ever remain as beautiful as that *glorious Arch* which spans the heavens, and as endearing as the firmament in which it is placed."

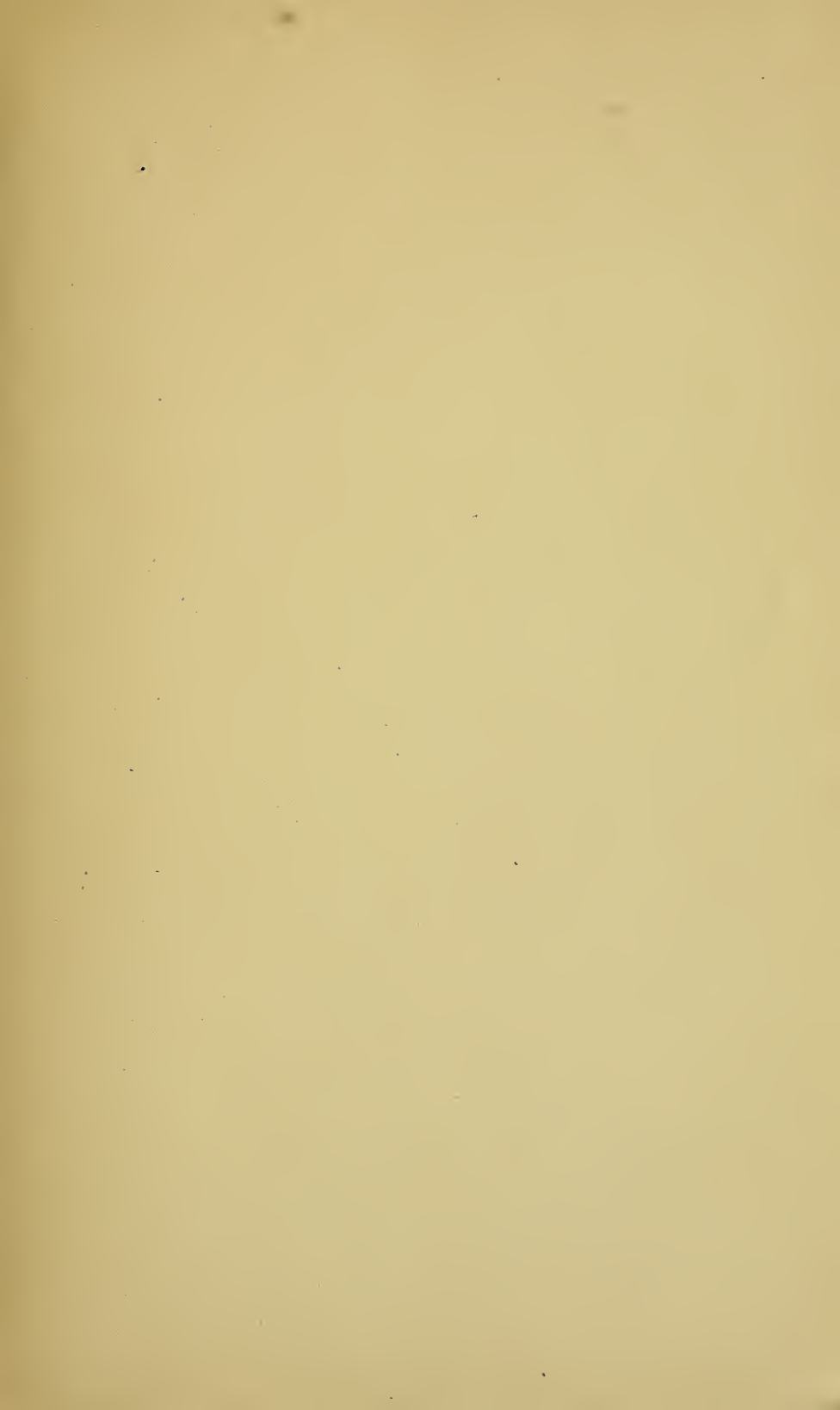
In conclusion, let us apply to our Union the patriotic words of the Venitian sage,

"ESTO PERPETUA."

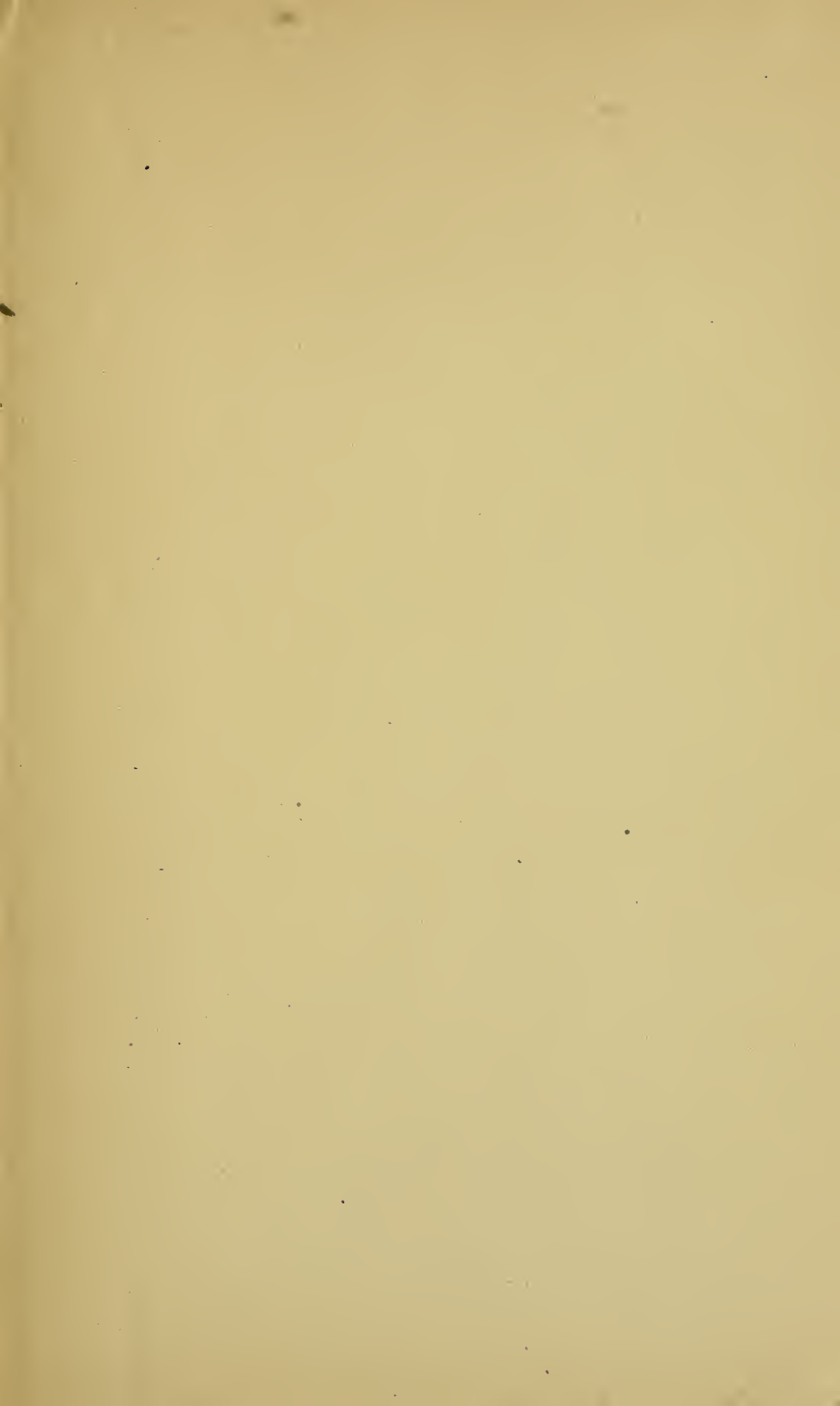












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